

March 17, 2015

To: Human Services Committee

From: Pam Crawford, South Windsor, CT

Re: Testimony in Support of HB 6941: An Act Concerning State Agency Interpreter Services

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I want to ask for your support for HB 6941. This bill will undo some of the damage that was caused when Governor Rowland pushed to dismantle and privatize state interpreter services.

I've worked for what is now called the DoRS interpreting unit for 15 years as of next month. Every day, on behalf of the state of Connecticut, I help deaf and hard of hearing residents access basic public services. We help our neighbors and friends fully participate in legal proceedings, comprehend medical procedures doctors recommend, follow along in classrooms, understand what the Governor is saying during emergency announcements, and in many other situations.

However, over the years, we have seen the state increasingly contract with for-profit and non-profit providers for these services. The result is higher costs for taxpayers and inconsistent services for those needing our help.

When a state agency needs to provide interpreting services, they should look to the state interpreters to do the work. It's a no-brainer in making sure we have a system that is both low-cost and meets strict oversight.